(d) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken for making education practical and professional?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. the National Curriculum Framework (NCF)—2005 prepared by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has suggested ways to reduce exam related stress, such as, on board or State level examinations at other stages of schooling such as class V, VIII or XI, as a long-term measure, making the class X examination optional, thus permitting students continuing in the same school to take an internal school examination and elimination of the terminology of 'pass'/'fail'.

The other key features of the recommendations are:

(i) Flexibility in examination time;

(ii) Flexibility in choice of subject;

(iii) Continuous and comprehensive evaluation and internal assessment;

(iv) Differential levels of the difficulty in subjects.

However, NCERT has only an adivosry role in the matter. It is upto the School Education Boards to adopt the recommendations.

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has taken up following steps towards examination reforms:

(i) Provision of 15 minutes extra time for candidates to read the question paper and to plan their answer in Class X & XII board examinations.

(ii) Restructuring question papers that can be answered by all the students within the allowed time period.

(iii) Publication of support materials such as sample question papers.

(iv) Publication of Performance Analysis.

(v) Providing counseling facility.

In addition CBSE has already implemented Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation from Classes I to VIII.

(d) Vocational streams at the higher secondary stage provides for diversification of educational opporturities so as to enhance individual employability, for enhancement of supply of skilled manpower and is an alternative for those pursuing higher education.

Reconstruction process of Afghanistan

364. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is helping the reconstruction process of Afghanistan in many spheres and one of the important spheres is Education;

(b) if so, what kind of help is given to the students of Afghanistan in higher edcuation, technical education, under-graduate section and high school section;

(c) whether it is a fact that both at high school and under-graduate section, there is lot of demand for more scholarships and seats and whether Government is considering to increase the seats and number of scholarship; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. India is helping the reconstruction process of Afghanistan in many spheres including education. The Government of India (GoI) has offered five hundred long-term university scholarship and five hundred short-term training programmes for Afghan nationals annually. Skills' development and capacity building have been identified by the Government as a key area of priority in tackling the challenge of re-building of Afghanistan. Other major skill development project are also being executed including for training of three thousand Afghan nationals in various trades of technical skills as well as a project for technical assistance to Women's Vocational Training Centre in Kabul. Since 2002, around 2215 Afghan nationals have got trained/studied in India under the various GoI sponsored training programmes. There is a considerable demand for seats in technical colleges. The requirements of Afganistan are long-term and India is committed to continue with its assistance to build up managerial and technical capacities. India's assistance programme in this field is one of the largest being executed in Afghanistan.

Reduction in retirement age of teaching staff in NCERT

365. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is contemplating on a scheme to reduce the retirement age of the teaching staff in NCERT to 60 years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the decision on lowering the retirement age would adversely affected the ongoing projects in NCERT.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Online issue of university degrees

366. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering the issue of university degrees online as these would prevent use of fake degrees;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) The University Grants Commission has informed that at present there is no proposal for online issue of university degrees.